

CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



JEFFREY M. YOUNG, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

159 THORNDIKE STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02141  
Telephone: (617) 349-6494 • Email: jyoung@cpsd.us

To: School Committee Members

From: Jeffrey M. Young  
Superintendent of Schools

Re: Response to Mayor Maher's Request for Information

Date: August 29, 2014

This memo is in response to recent questions about whether or not the district's actions to fill three specific positions are in accordance with School Committee policy (Program Manager for Educator Development, Welcoming Schools Coordinator, and Acting Director of STEM). I asked our Chief Financial Officer, Executive Director for Human Resources, and Legal Counsel to review School Committee policies concerning the hiring of professional staff positions ("Professional Staff Positions," adopted March 18, 2008 and "Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies," adopted June 16, 2009), current and past procedures relating to the hiring and appointment of staff, and past practices as exemplified by staffing decisions made during the past five years. Based on this review, I believe that the hiring of the Program Manager for Educator Development and Welcoming Schools Coordinator, and the temporary change in title and responsibilities of an existing staff member to that of "Acting Director of STEM," all complied with the School Committee's policies, were not substantially different from staffing decisions made in previous years, and, moreover, reflect good and thoughtful management of the district.

As you know, for the past several years the School Committee has engaged in a comprehensive on-going review of its policies in an effort to try to keep policies contemporary with evolving educational, societal, and organizational needs. In 2008 and 2009, recommendations were made and adopted by the School Committee regarding the revision of several policies relating to staff hiring to better reflect the tenets of the Education Reform Act of 1993, which specifically accorded authority for hiring to school superintendents and principals rather than to local school committees, with the exception of a few positions such as that of Assistant Superintendent. I have attached for your information the March 18, 2008 recommendation, which was adopted to revise the "Professional Staff Positions" policy, which deleted the requirement that the School Committee approve job descriptions. I have also attached the June 16, 2009 recommendation to revise the "Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies," "Professional Staff Hiring,"

”Staff Hiring” and ”Staff Hirings” policies, which were also adopted, and which resulted in the deletion of three of the four policies. I have provided these documents as support of our understanding that the School Committee sets broad policy goals and guidelines (e.g. ”All professional staff positions in the school district will be created *initially* by the School Committee”) and gives the superintendent the flexibility and discretion to make decisions (including staffing and hiring decisions) necessary and responsive to the operation of the school district.

The procedure for creating a new, permanent budgeted position in the General Fund is through the annual budget development process. The Superintendent and his administrative team prepare a Proposed Budget that is submitted to the School Committee for their review and eventual adoption. The proposed creation of new positions and elimination of positions as known at the time are presented in the budget. The School Committee must adopt a balanced budget. The adopted budget usually includes funding of ”reserve” teacher and aide FTEs to ensure that there are funds available for the district to respond to enrollment-related needs for additional staff. By longstanding practice, the administration has had the flexibility to manage the district’s staffing after the initial creation of positions. This has included temporary appointments to ”acting” positions when there is a vacancy, using reserve teacher and aide FTEs to create positions that respond to enrollment or compliance-related needs for additional staff, and allowing schools to use School Improvement Plan (SIP) funds or aide allocations to create positions for their schools. In addition, because our organization is not static, job responsibilities and job titles routinely are reviewed and updated before posting a vacant budgeted position; job responsibilities and titles are adjusted to respond to changing needs within a department; and, when an opportunity arises, a position may be held vacant in order to evaluate whether a new organizational structure might be advantageous to the district. Examples in recent years include:

- Created temporary lead teacher for Educational Technology and lead teacher for Library Media Services due to the retirements of the Coordinator of Educational Technology and Coordinator of Library Media Services. This was done in order to give the district the opportunity to conduct a program review to determine whether there should be a change to the structure of those departments.
- Reclassified lead teacher for Athletics to Director of Athletics.
- Created temporary additional lead teachers in Physical Education to assist that department when the Athletic Director position was vacant. Changed the title and job responsibilities of Assistant Director of OSE to Director of OSS
- Changed title of Chief of Staff to Chief Planning Officer

These actions did not add FTEs to the district and were essentially budget-neutral.

The initial creation of grant-funded positions occurs through the School Committee’s vote to accept a grant. Grants are accepted by the School Committee annually after the grant has been

awarded to the district. The administration is responsible for developing grant proposals that meet the requirements of the funder (the primary granting entity is the State) and for ensuring that all grant expenditures are aligned with the approved grant proposal. From year to year, the positions funded by any particular grant may change. The procedure for notification of staffing changes under the grant is through the Superintendent's recommendation for grant acceptance. It is not uncommon for the district to commence a hiring process for a new position that will be grant funded before the School Committee's vote to accept the grant. This is because the official grant amounts are not published by the State until mid to late July, and thus the vote of acceptance usually happens at the summer School Committee meeting. It typically takes two to three months to complete an entire hiring process (posting, recruitment, interviews, reference checking, etc), so the district usually begins the process before July in order to have an employee hired and prepared to begin work at the start of the school year. The effective date of appointment is aligned with the actual grant period and after acceptance of the grant by the School Committee.

Below is background information concerning the procedures followed in the appointment of staff to the three specific positions:

#### **1. Program Manager for Educator Development**

- An agreement was reached between the Superintendent and the CEA to create a joint Professional Development Committee to provide recommendations for improvements to the CPS professional development program.
- The new Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction was hired in July 2013 and given responsibilities for professional development and leadership of the joint committee.
- In June 2012, the Lead Teacher for Professional Development, whose position was funded by the Title IIA grant, retired. She was employed on a part-time basis through a service contract (funded by the Title IIA grant) during both FY 13 and FY 14. In this role she assisted with the district's required mentoring program for new teachers.
- At the request of the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent developed a vision and plan for CPS educator development, including a new teacher institute. This vision was presented to the School Committee as part of the presentation on Curriculum on January 7, 2014.
- It was determined that to effectively implement the new teacher institute as well as an expanded program of professional development for all teachers, a program manager would be required to administer these activities. The activities include an improved New Teacher Induction Program as well as a year-long New Teacher Institute and Mentoring Program. The Institute will model the practice of differentiated instruction by tailoring programs to teachers' licensure and professional development needs.

- The Title IIA grant was identified as a possible funding source and the State provided preliminary informal confirmation that use of the grant to support this position was permissible and would meet their approval.
- A job description was developed and posted on March 31, 2014. Following a series of interviews, a candidate was selected for the position in early July. The effective date of appointment was September 1, 2014.
- The State released the official grant allocation in the third week of July.
- The School Committee voted to accept the Title IIA grant, and thereby “created initially” the position of Program Manager, at the meeting of July 29, 2014. Information that described the purpose of the grant and how funds would be expended was provided as backup to the Superintendent’s recommendation.
- The procedures described above are in keeping with the district’s past practices. Prior examples of similar process to hire into new grant positions include:
  - Creation of Instructional Coaching positions funded by Title IIA grant in 2003.
  - Creation of Instructional Coaching positions funded by Title IIA grant in 2006.
- These procedures also demonstrate the district’s continuing commitment to reviewing current programs, job responsibilities and positions to meet evolving organizational needs.

**2. Acting STEM Director**

- The vacant Math Coordinator position was posted and a hiring process conducted; however, a candidate of choice was not identified. When a position will be vacant during the school year, the district’s standard practice is to appoint an existing or retired employee in an “acting” capacity with a plan to re-advertise the position in the late winter/early spring for the following school year, and/or make other temporary adjustments to meet the district’s needs. In this case, it was determined that this vacancy presented an opportunity to evaluate the potential strengths and weakness of a combined department of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) on a pilot basis for one year. Accordingly, the district’s Science Coordinator was appointed to the position of Acting STEM Director, with the additional support of an acting district-wide STEM Lead Teacher and a district-wide Math Coach, to guide the roll-out of the new Math in Focus curriculum initiative. If, based on the initial outcomes of this pilot structure, the district determines that a STEM department is a promising direction, a budget initiative will be presented to the School Committee as part of the FY16 Proposed Budget along with any related permanent positions that may be proposed; if not, we will proceed with a search for a new Coordinator of Mathematics for the 2015/16 school year.
- A full description of this temporary creation of STEM positions was sent to the School Committee in July prior to making the appointments.

- This temporary organizational structure is budget neutral and no additional FTEs were added to the budget.

### 3. Welcoming Schools Coordinator

- At the time of the FY2015 budget adoption, I committed to moving forward with our efforts to build capacity in the area of family engagement through existing staff levels (i.e. without adding any FTEs) and an additional allocation of \$25K. The context of this commitment was a budget initiative to implement the recommendations of Dr. Karen Mapp.
- Discussions were held at cabinet level about how to accomplish this promise. After review, it was determined by administration that the current responsibilities assigned to the position of Family Liaison for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender families could be expanded to include a broader role in family engagement planning activities. The position was posted in the interest of transparency, interviews were conducted, and the successful candidate was appointed to the expanded position.
- The change was budget neutral as an existing FTE was reclassified.

In conclusion, having thoroughly reviewed the personnel process associated with the three positions, we state that the district has complied with all laws and regulations, all School Committee policies, and sound management practice. Furthermore, we have been attentive to past practice in the Cambridge Public Schools and have conducted business in concert with history and tradition. Finally, the School Committee continues to fulfill its organizational and legal responsibilities in these and all personnel matters.



CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

159 THORNDIKE STREET CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02141



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March 18, 2008

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

Approval of Revision to the Professional Staff Positions Policy

Recommendation: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Professional Staff Positions Policy as detailed in the attached document.

This policy is being presented for its second reading at the March 18, 2008 School Committee meeting.

Description: This revision is being presented to update the current terminology with respect to the professional staff positions policy before the policy is posted on the internet as part of the School Committee's efforts to post its entire policy manual.

Supporting Data: Proposed red-line revision of the Professional Staff Positions Policy.

Respectfully submitted,

*Thomas Fowler-Finn*

Thomas Fowler-Finn, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools





File: GCA

PROFESSIONAL STAFF POSITIONS

All professional staff positions in the school ~~district~~system will be created initially by the ~~S~~school ~~C~~committee. It is the ~~S~~chool ~~C~~committee's intent to activate a sufficient number of positions to accomplish the school ~~district~~system's goals and objectives and to provide for the equitable staffing of each school building. Although such positions may remain temporarily unfilled, only the ~~S~~chool ~~C~~committee may abolish a position it has created.

~~Each time a new position is established by the committee, the superintendent will present for the committee's approval a job description for the position, which specifies the job holder's qualifications and the job's performance responsibilities. The Superintendent will ensure that the Office of Human Resources maintains a comprehensive set of job descriptions for all positions.~~

That it be the ~~policy~~POLICY of the Cambridge School Committee to declare teacher positions open only after a ~~Needs~~ ~~a~~Assessment of the school at which the vacancy has occurred and of the school ~~district~~system as a whole.



## CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

159 THORNDIKE STREET CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02141



June 16, 2009

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

Approval of Revision to the Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies,  
Professional Staff Hiring, Staff Hirings and Staff Hiring Policies

Recommendation: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies, Professional Staff Hiring, Staff Hirings and Staff Hiring Policies as detailed in the attached documents.

These policies are being presented for their second reading at the June 16, 2009 School Committee meeting.

Description: This revision is being presented to update the current terminology with respect to the policy before the policy is posted on the internet as part of the School Committee's efforts to post its entire policy manual.

Supporting Data: Proposed red-line revision of the Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies, Professional Staff Hiring, Staff Hirings and Staff Hiring Policies.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn L. Turk".

Carolyn L. Turk, Ed.D.  
Interim Superintendent of Schools



**PROFESSIONAL STAFF RECRUITING/POSTING OF VACANCIES**

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent, with the assistance of the administrative staff, to determine the personnel needs of the school districtsystem and it is the responsibility of the principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, to determine the personnel needs of the individual schools. In addition, school councils may review personnel requirements as a means of evaluating the needs of a school. Any recommendations for the creation or elimination of a position must be approved by the School Committee.

The search for good teachers and other professional employees will extend to a wide variety of educational institutions and geographical areas. It will take into consideration the characteristics of the City of Cambridgetown and the need for a heterogeneous staff from various cultural backgrounds.

Recruitment procedures will not overlook the talents and potential of individuals already employed by the school districtsystem. Any current employee may apply for any position for which he or she has certification and meets other stated requirements.

Openings in the schools will be posted in sufficient time, before the position is filled, to permit current employees to submit applications.

REFS.: ——— Collective Bargaining Agreements

PROFESSIONAL STAFF HIRING

Through its employment policies, the district will strive to attract, secure, and hold the highest qualified personnel for all professional positions. The selection process will be based upon an awareness to candidates who will devote themselves to the education and welfare of the children attending the schools.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent, and of persons to whom he or she delegates this responsibility, to determine the personnel needs of the school system and to locate suitable candidates. No position may be created without the approval of the school committee. The district's goal is to employ and retain personnel who are motivated, will strive always to do their best, and are committed to providing the best educational environment for the children

It will be the duty of the superintendent to see that persons considered for employment in the schools meet all certification requirements and the requirements of the committee for the type of position for which the nomination is made.

The following guidelines will be used in the selection of personnel:

1. There will be no discrimination in the hiring process due to age, sex, creed, race, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or place of residence.
2. The quality of instruction is enhanced by a staff with a wide variation in background, educational preparation, and previous experience.
3. The administrator responsible for the hiring of a staff member (In the case of district wide positions, for the position of principals, it is the superintendent. For building based personnel, it is the principal.) is directed to establish a representative screening committee. The administrator has the final say in determining who will be hired but it is expected that the screening committee's input will be a factor in the decision.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69:6; 71:38; 71:38G; 71:39; 71:45; 71:55B  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Massachusetts Board of Education Requirements for  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Certification of Teachers, Principals, Supervisors,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Directors, Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents in the Public  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Schools of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, revised 1994  
 603 CMR 7:00 and 44:00

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File: GCEA/GDPA

### STAFF HIRINGS

~~Any position that is going to receive a full contract must be advertised and the Affirmative Action Officer should be so informed; further, that the Superintendent be directed to prepare a compilation of policies and documents which can be packaged in booklet form so as to serve as a manual of policies and procedures in the filling of regular contracted full time and contracted part time positions.~~

STAFF HIRING

All newly hired members of the Cambridge School Department must become residents of the City of Cambridge within one year of the date of their appointment for the duration of their employment. Any employee who fails to comply with the provisions of this section will be notified on, or before April 15, of that school year, that the persons employed will be terminated at the conclusion of that school year pursuant to State statute.

Presently employed employees of the School Department shall be exempted from the residency provision for the purposes of promotion.

The School Department shall commence active advertising and recruitment through local newspapers, radio, and community groups for all open jobs and Civil Service examinations to make all Cambridge residents aware of existing job opportunities, and further, that a special telephone link line and community bulletin board be established to announce job openings on an on-going basis, including the background required for these jobs and the applications procedures; and, further that the School Committee affirm the Mayor's call for a "level of excellence and commitment from our employees that has never been experienced in this City."

AND, further, that it be a policy of the School Committee that the potential for this kind of excellence and commitment be considered in judging applicants for positions; and further that the School Committee and Superintendent will evaluate within the next year the effectiveness of these procedures and policies in attracting Cambridge residents who meet the standards of excellence and commitment.